

CHEROKEE COUNTY DEPT. OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2013/2014 FY

**4800 W US Highway 64
Murphy, NC 28906
828-837-7455**

**Office Hours: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Monday—Friday**

Our vision is to create a cooperative atmosphere conducive to empowering individuals to secure meaningful employment, which will ensure a better, more prosperous future for themselves and their families. Our mission is to provide necessary and supportive services to assist and protect our most vulnerable citizens; the poor, the children, the aged, disabled, and the sick which will lead to a safe, stable living environment and ultimately, a better quality of life.

Board of Social Services

Karen Kephart, Chairperson

Dana Jones

Julie Higdon

Robert Merrill

Dr. Dan Eichenbaum

Director of Social Services

Donna M. Crawford

Message from the Director

Welcome

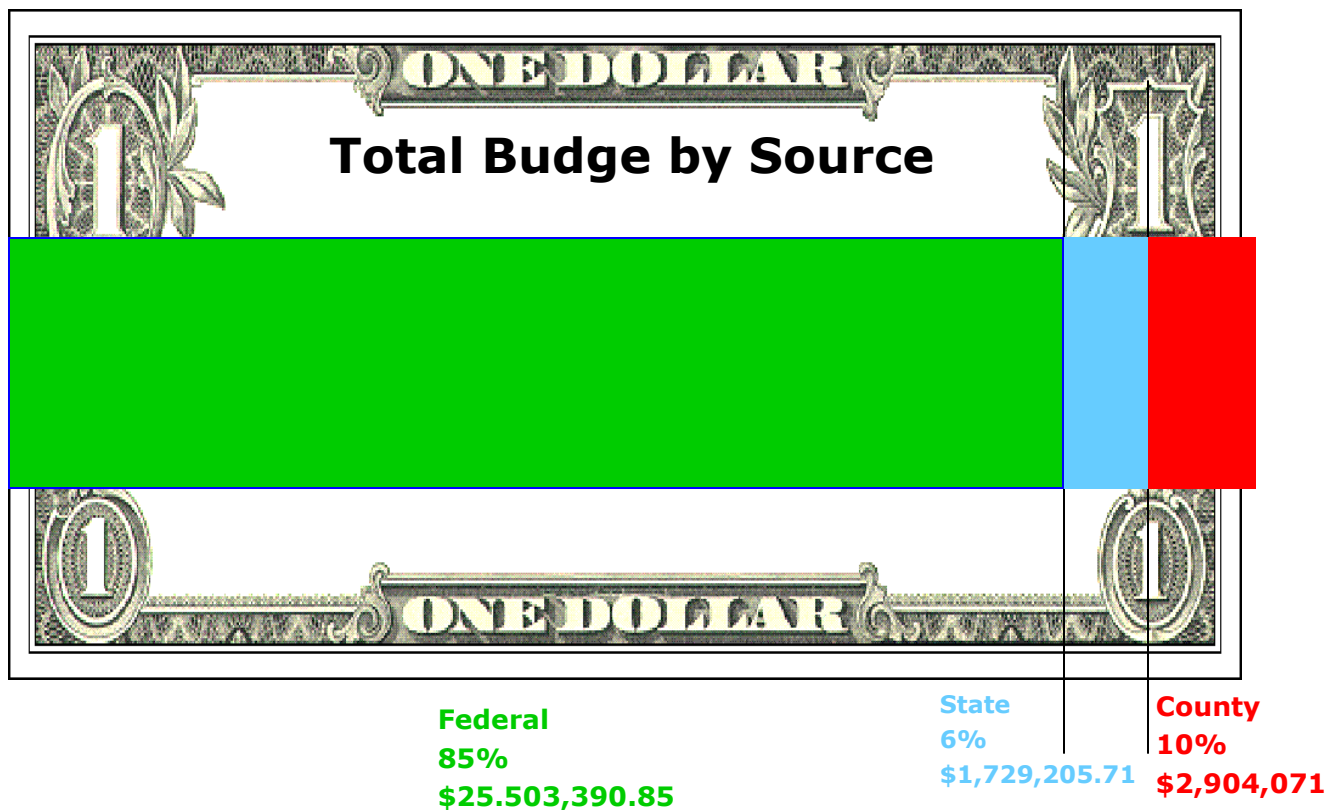
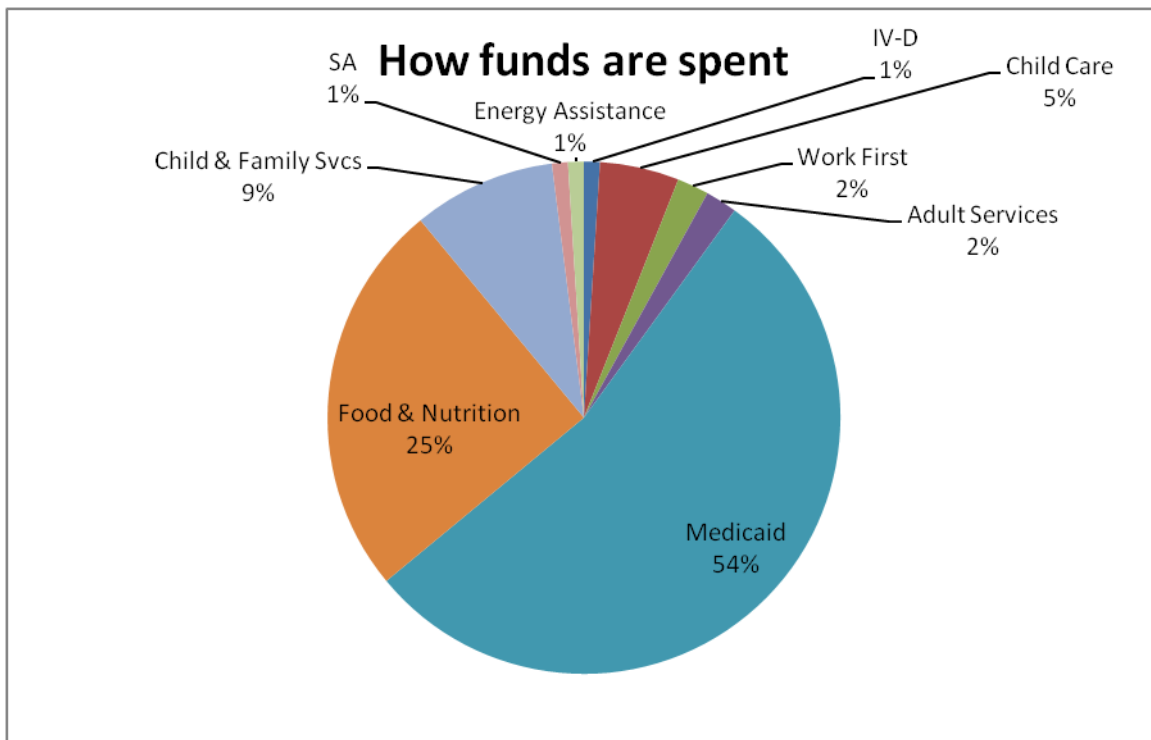
Thank you for taking the time to read our FY 2013-2014 Annual Report. I would like to thank county management, the Board of Commissioners, community partners, and citizens for their continued partnership and support. Also, our Social Services Board Members should be commended for their leadership and support of our staff and the citizens we serve.

In the midst of economic challenges, many people need assistance with basic needs for the first time in their lives. Our agency provided services to 19% of our population (approximately 5700 citizens) this past fiscal year. The economic impact of our programs in the community is significant. Our economic services unit alone had an estimated economic impact of more than \$31 million last fiscal year in our community via Child Care Subsidy, Medicaid, and Food and Nutritional Assistance. These revenues support day care centers, hospitals, health care professionals, pharmacies, and grocery stores to ensure the well being of children, families, disabled adults, and seniors.

We must be responsive and sensitive to the needs of the less fortunate and most vulnerable citizens in our community. At the same time, however; we have a responsibility to the taxpaying community to meet human need with cost-effective methods.

We have great challenges ahead, but even greater opportunities. The staff of the Cherokee County Department of Social Services have dedicated themselves to establishing a team approach in which to offer services in the most efficient and effective way possible, while ensuring that all citizens receive these services in a professional and courteous manner.

HOW OUR BUDGET WAS SPENT FY 2013-2014



Meeting Basic Needs in Our Community

Medicaid Recipients Per Year in Cherokee County



Medicaid and Special Assistance

Medicaid is a health insurance program for low-income individuals and families who cannot afford health care costs. Medicaid serves low-income parents, children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Special Assistance provides a monthly payment to help pay the cost of facility placement or in-home care.

4,138 Number of Households receiving Medicaid

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE HEALTH CHOICE FOR CHILDREN

North Carolina Health Choice provides a comprehensive health care program for uninsured children when the family income is at or below 200% of federal poverty level.

537 Children Enrolled

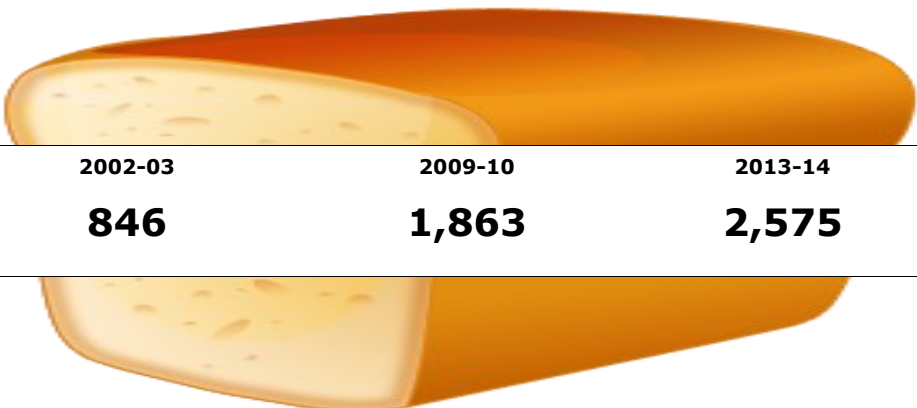
FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

The Food & Nutrition Services (FNS) is a federal food assistance program that helps low-income families. In North Carolina monthly allotments of FNS are issued via Electronic Benefit Transfer cards (EBT cards). The purpose of Food & Nutrition Services is to end hunger and improve nutrition and health. It helps low-income households by issuing food assistance to supplement a household's food dollars.

2688 Applications Received

2575 Average Monthly FN/S Households

Average Food & Nutrition Households by Fiscal Year



2002-03	2009-10	2013-14
846	1,863	2,575

PROGRAM INTEGRITY

Some people do not give important information or do not tell the truth when applying for help. Under North Carolina law, persons must give caseworkers all information needed to decide if they can receive benefits such as Food & Nutrition Services, Medicaid, Energy Assistance, Special Assistance, Child Care Subsidy, or Work First, or other programs. Those who do not report correctly, commit a crime. If you suspect fraud, report this to **837-7455 ext. 241 or 228**.



MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION




Transportation to medical appointment is provided, arranged or reimbursed for individuals who are eligible for this service.

1826	Clients Transported
7758	Number of Trips for the Year
\$27,640	Direct Payment to Clients
\$183,510	Payments to Provider –Cherokee County Transit
\$11,338	Payments to other Providers

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

Assures that children receive adequate parental support by locating absent parents, establishing paternity, establishing medical and financial support, modifying and enforcing court ordered support obligations.

	858	Active Cases-Monthly Average
	\$1,758,322.59	Collections
	\$27,498.00	Incentives Earned
	45	Paternities Established
	288	New Support Orders Established
	29	Support Orders Modified

LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND CRISIS PROGRAMS

LIEAP provides assistance with heating expenses through a once a year program. This program assists households with income at or below 110% of the federal poverty level and assets not exceeding \$2,200.

607	Households Served
\$238	Average Payment
\$144,700	Total Payments

The Crisis Intervention Program and Duke Energy are programs to assist people in an energy crisis.

242	Households Served
\$103,949	Expenditures
\$430	Average Payment

MONTHLY AVERAGE OF CHILDREN RECEIVING DAY CARE SUBSIDY

228 children



SERVICE PROGRAMS

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE (CPS) INVESTIGATIONS

Reports of suspected child abuse, neglect and/or dependency are investigated. Reports can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

438 reports received of abuse, neglect and/or dependency

232 Monthly average of children being served through CPS

FOSTER CARE SERVICES

Children are placed in the responsibility of the agency through court ordered custody, voluntary placement agreements, or release for adoption. Permanency planning for children provides time-limited and goal-oriented care for children to achieve permanent families as soon as possible.

- 63** Children in custody of Agency – 07/01/13
- 49** Children entering Agency custody through 6/30/14
- 28** Children leaving Agency custody
- 74** Children remaining in custody—06/30/14

ADOPTIONS

Adoption provides children with legal permanency in safe, loving homes. Adoptions include agency adoptive placements, stepparent and relative adoptions and independent adoptions arranged between birth parents and unrelated individuals.

- 9** Agency Adoptions Finalized
- 5** Non-Agency Adoptions Finalized



ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICE (APS) EVALUATIONS

Reports of suspected abuse, neglect and/or exploitation are evaluated and assessments are completed regarding the needs of disabled individuals 18 and older. Services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

151 Reports of Abuse, Neglect, and/or Exploitation

GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES

The Court appoints Social Services as guardian for elderly or disabled adults who are mentally incompetent and cannot make responsible decisions concerning their personal care and their finances.

25 Average Monthly Guardianship Cases

REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE SERVICES

Social Services is appointed by the Court, Social Security, or the Veterans Administration to receive and assure the appropriate use of benefit funds when individuals are unable to do so.

32 Average Monthly Payee Cases